

THE UUA BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT TO CONGREGATIONS

January 2013

Greetings from the Board of the UUA! We've just wrapped up our quarterly meeting in Philadelphia, where we enjoyed spending time with Young Adult UU's. Meeting in places outside Boston is one way the Board has sought to reach out in recent years to broaden the conversation and deepen connections. Sending this letter to you is another.

The UUA uses Policy Governance to conduct the work of the board, including oversight of the Administration. An indispensable part of the board's work under this form of governance is setting the Ends of the Association. An "End" is an outcome an organization intends to achieve. Everything the Administration of the Association does is aimed at achieving the Ends. It's the board's job not only to set those Ends, but also to monitor progress toward them.

After living with the current Ends for the last three years, we have decided to consider changing them to more accurately reflect our understanding of the Association's members' desires. After considering the basic purpose of the Association, found in the bylaws: *"To serve the needs of its member congregations; organize new congregations; extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions and implement its principles,"* we began by reviewing the dialogues we have had with you over the past few years about your values and the differences you want to make in the world -- things like the Healthy Relationships conversations with 75 congregations, the thousands of Gathered Here conversations, and the World Cafes with Youth Caucus over the past 4 General Assemblies. The changes we are proposing won't go into effect until June and are subject to change, but we wanted you to see what we have done and we would appreciate hearing your thoughts on them.

These were developed as one Global End statement followed by seven lower-level Ends statements:

1.0 Global End: The UUA is a healthy network of covenanted Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities, in accountable relationships and alive with transforming power, moving our local communities and the world towards more love, justice, and peace at a justifiable cost that does not undermine long term sustainability.

- 1.1 Congregations have and use UUA resources necessary to enhance the spiritual and religious exploration by people in their communities and to enhance the ministry of their members.
- 1.2 Congregations are better able to achieve their missions and to spread awareness of UU ideals and principles through their participation in covenanted networks of UU communities.
- 1.3 Congregations are intentionally inclusive, multi-generational and multi-cultural in powerful mission to, and with, under-served and unserved communities.
- 1.4 We see a net increase in the number of people served by our congregations and covenanted communities.
- 1.5 We see a net increase in the number of mutually covenanted congregations.
- 1.6 We see a net increase in inspired religious leaders equipped to effectively start and sustain new covenanted communities.
- 1.7 UU institutions are healthy, vital, collaborative partners invested in the future of UUism, its principles and theologies.

In the coming months, in partnership with the Districts Presidents Association, we'll be engaging in many conversations with Unitarian Universalists, testing these Ends, seeing if these are, in fact, the ways in which you want the Association to make an impact in the world.

Adopting new Ends is merely the latest step in a governance reform process that has been underway for four years. Having changed the composition of our board and having worked with districts toward governance change at the district level, we are now initiating conversations about how to strengthen the democratic process at General Assembly.

In Philadelphia, we were honored to have the chance to listen deeply to the interests and values of leaders from Diverse Revolutionary UU Ministries (DRUUM), UU Ministers Association, General Assembly Planning Committee, and from UU Young Adult groups. Of course, GA is not only about “how we govern.” It’s also about “how we gather” in vital ways that sustain identity and community, and equip leaders for the faith. So, in partnership with the Administration, we look forward to bringing questions for further creative dialogue to this summer’s GA in Louisville, Kentucky.

After considering, at the meeting just concluded, the Administration’s report about its achievement of our current Ends, the Board asked for “remediation reports” setting out the strategies the Administration plans to use to correct areas where it reported that the Association was falling short of its standards. We’ll receive those reports in time for our April meeting, before we vote on the budget.

We also addressed a number of bylaw amendments to bring to GA in June. These include proposals to allow electronic voting beginning in 2014, changes to Article II that would modify language around discrimination, changes to some committees based on a smaller board size next year, reconciliation of some discrepancies in bylaws concerning which committees the President is or is not an ex officio member of, standardization of when elected and appointed committee positions commence, recognition of regions, and establishment of run-off procedures in the event of a tie vote for elected offices when more than two persons are running. You can read all these changes in the preliminary GA agenda, which will be available in the next few weeks.

We appointed Ms. Carol Montgomery to be the chair of the Appointments Committee. We appointed the Rev. Dr. Susan Ritchie to be Secretary of the Association and Ms. Donna Harrison to be Vice-Moderator, beginning after GA. Ms. Katherine Allen was appointed to replace Mr. Charlie King as an at-large trustee and a process was developed to replace Katherine with a new youth observer.

The board voted at the meeting just concluded to provide this direct communication of board activity and decisions following each face-to-face meeting. More detailed information can be seen online at <http://uua.org>. We hope you find this information useful in the life of your congregation.

Finally, we very much appreciate the hospitality afforded to us by the local congregations in the Philadelphia area as well as the staff of the Joseph Priestly District and our own fellow trustee, Ms. Natalia Averett from the JPD for all the work done to make this another successful meeting outside of Boston. We will be making some decisions in the next few weeks about where our January 2014 meeting will be held.

In faith and trust and on behalf of the UUA Board of Trustees,



Tom Loughrey,

Secretary